

## Message Text

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13  
ACTION EUR-12

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R 120829Z AUG 76  
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4564  
INFO AMCONSUL ADANA  
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL  
AMCONSUL IZMIR

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINR, TU  
SUBJECT: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON NEW HEAD OF RELIGIOUS  
AFFAIRS OFFICE, SULEYMAN ATES

1. IT WAS ANNOUNCED ON JULY 29 THAT DOCENT (ASSISTANT PROFESSOR) SULEYMAN ATES WOULD REPLACE DR. LUTFI DOGAN AS HEAD OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS. THIS GOVERNMENTAL POST, CREATED BY ATATURK AFTER THE ABOLITION OF THE CALIPHATE AND THE ULEMA, IS UNDER A MINISTER OF STATE AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF PIOUS FOUNDATIONS, APPOINTMENT OF IMAMS AND HOCAS (CLERGY), AND COORDINATION OF FACILITIES FOR RELIGIOUS PILGRIMS TO MECCA.

2. ATES WAS BORN IN TADIM, ELAZIG PROVINCE, IN 1933. HE FIRST BEGAN TO LEARN "TECVIK" (THE ART OF CHANTING THE KORAN) IN ELAZIG. LATER HE STUDIED ARABIC WITH HACI MUHARREM EFENDI. IN 1951 HE WENT TO ERZURUM TO CONTINUE HIS EDUCATION. IN 1952 HE MARRIED THE DAUGHTER OF HAKKI CIMILLI, WHO SUPPORTED HIM IN HIS EFFORTS TO LEARN ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY AND TEACHINGS. HE CONTINUED HIS STUDY OF ISLAM BY TAKING COURSES IN "LOGIC" AND THE "INTERPRETATION OF METAPHORS". IN 1953 HE BEGAN HIS FORMAL EDUCATION AND SECURED A PRIMARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA. IN THE SAME YEAR HE WAS ADMITTED TO THE IMAM HATIP SCHOOL IN ELAZIG. IN 1960 HE GRADUATED WITH  
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HORNORS AND ALSO OBTAINED A LYCEE DIPLOMA. IN 1956 HE

BECAME AN INSTRUCTOR AT THE IMAM HATIP SCHOOL WHERE HE TAUGHT A COURSE IN THE "SCIENTIFIC INTERPRETATION OF THE KORAN". IN 1968 HE OBTAINED HIS DOCTORATE AND THE FOLLOWING YEAR WAS CALLED UP FOR MILITARY SERVICE. AFTER COMPLETION F HIS SERVICE IN 1971, HE RETURNED TO TEACHING. DURING THE SAME YEAR, HE COMPLETED THE STATE SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES COURSE IN ENGLISH WITH HONORS. IN 1973 HE SPENT EIGHT MONTHS IN IRAQ AND EGYPT FOR FURTHER RELIGIOUS STUDIES. ON NOVEMBER 24, 1974 HE BECAME DOCENT AT THE ANKARA FACULTY OF TEHOLOGY AFTER SUBMITTING HIS THESIS, ENTITLED "THE SCHOOL OF WRITTEN INTERPRETATIONS".

3. UPON THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS APPOINTMENT, DR. ATEŞ DECLARED THAT HE INTENDED TO KEEP HIS OFFICE NEUTRAL WITH RESPECT TO POLITICAL AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS. NEVERTHELESS, HE WILL BE UNDER PRESSURE FROM SUPPORTERS OF DEPPRIMIN ERBAKAN'S RELIGIOUSLY CONSERVATIVE NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) WHICH FINALLY TRIUMPHED IN ITS TWO-YEAR CAMPAIGN TO OUST HIS PREDECESSOR, THE COMPARATIVELY LIBERAL DOĞAN. AT THE MOMENT ATEŞ APPARENTLY ENJOYS NSP SUPPORT, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE FACT THAT ERBAKAN PROMPTLY PAID A COURTESY CALL ON HIM. THE PRO-NSP MILLİ GAZETE PROMINENTLY FEATURED A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE MEETING UNDER THE BANNER HEADLINE "MORALITY BEGINS WITH THE DIRECTOR OF REGLIGIOUS AFFAIRS". ATEŞ, WILL BE UNDER SCRUTINY AS WELL FROM MANY TURKS WHO FEAR THAT ERBAKAN AND HIS SUPPORTERS ARE ATTEMPTING TO REVERSE THE SECULAR REFORMS OF ATATÜRK. FURTHER, ATEŞ MAY HAVE TO AVOID BEING CAUGHT BETWEEN DIFFERING FACTIONS WITHIN THE NSP: THOSE WHO FAVOR GIVING PRIORITY TO A LARGE EXPANSIONOF IMAM-HATIP SCHOOLS AND THOSE PRIMARILY SUPPORTING THE REESTABLISHMENT OF TRADITIONAL KORAN COURSES IN VILLAGE MOSQUES.

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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** PINR, TU, (ATES, SULEYMAN)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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